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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 1048
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RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 1617
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 4836
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6461
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2623
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2457
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2603
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - PIRACY OFF SOMALIA AND
MIDDLE EAST PEACE

1. LEAD STORIES: Wednesday morning papers led with a murder and a separate murder attempt on Tuesday at homes of former top health ministry officials, saying police suspect that these were acts of terrorism targeting ex-health ministry bureaucrats.

2. "Peace on the Ground Imperative to Stamping out Piracy" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun wrote from London on the planned launch in December of naval operations by NATO to crack down on rampant piracy off Somalia (9/19): "The root problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia lies not in waters but on the ground inside the country, as acts of piracy appear to be an indispensable 'tool to earn foreign currency' for the Somalis, who have been suffering from civil war since the 1990s. Money stolen by pirates is said to have been supplied to various political and armed groups in Somalia. The Americans, Europeans, and Japanese are called upon to deepen their engagement in peace-making in Somalia in order to halt a vicious circle of people suffering from civil war resorting to piracy and stripped money being used for continued conflict."

3. "Expectations and Realities Awaiting Obama in Middle East" The liberal Asahi stated in an editorial (11/19): "In sharp contrast to President Bush, whose policy generated strong anti-U.S. sentiment in the Middle East, President-elect Obama appears to be viewed favorably in the region. This is probably because of various factors, such as his ethnic identity, as well as his policy of dialogue and coordination. However, there is no guarantee that his Middle East policy will go through smoothly. In fact, the reality holds that Obama will be confronted with unparalleled

challenges..... Obama calls for dialogue and international coordination. There is no doubt that such an approach is the only way to deliver regional stability, as military power alone cannot contain the Middle East and as the U.S. has been losing its clout."

SCHIEFFER